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ABSTRACT

An extensive research review by M. Adams (1990) led her to the conclusion that providing instruction and reinforcement in learning common rimes is highly beneficial in fostering growth in learning to read. While substantial amounts of reading, either independent or with partners, is critical in learning words with common rimes, focused study is also helpful. The Word Challenge Game offers such an opportunity for focused study. This paper presents the basic structure for the game with step-by-step details. The paper suggests that older students might work with younger students in the Word Challenge Game, and that the game could be a great activity for children and their parents to do at home. Appended is a list of common rimes and key words. (NKA)

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Learning Words with Common Rimes.

by Edward J. Dwyer

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Learning Words with Common Rimes

Wyle and Durell (1970) identified 37 common rimes that are found in approximately 500 words in reading materials typical in the elementary school These rimes are: ack, ail, ain, ake, ale, ame, an, ank, ap, are, ash, at, ate, aw, ay, eat, ell, est, ice, ick, ide, ight, ill, in, ine, ing, ink, ip, it, ock, oke, op, ore, ot, ug, ump, unk. A rime is a syllable consisting of a vowel and any letter(s) that follow. Rimes are also know as phonograms, word families, and graphemic bases. Onsets are the consonant letters preceding rimes. An onset in a rime can be a single consonants (*sack*) consonant clusters (*snack*) or consonant digraph (*shack*).

An extensive review of research by Adams (1990) led her to the conclusion that providing instruction and reinforcement in learning common rimes is highly beneficial in fostering growth in learning to read. Cunningham (2000) suggested that "syllables are the most distinct sound units in English, and children and adults find it much easier to divide syllables into their onsets (all letters before a vowel) and rimes (vowel and what follows) than into any other units" (181).

The sound to letter correspondence of rimes is highly reliable. For example, when "unk" appears in one word it will almost always have the same pronunciation in another word or syllable (Ex. chunk, bunk, trunk...).

Naturally, learning to identify words containing these rimes instantaneously is essential for fluent reading. While substantial amounts of reading, either independent or with partners, is critical to learning words with common rimes, focused study is also helpful. The Word Challenge Game offers such an opportunity for focused study. Children find this game enjoyable and usually achieve high levels of success. There are great opportunities for variation

with students with differing achievement and competence levels. The basic structure is presented below:

1. Cut 5" x 5" (13 cm x 13 cm) pieces of mat board. Scrap pieces of mat board are often available from framing shops at no charge. Ordinary card stock (110 lb. paper) can also be used but the mat board is sturdier.

2. Type the directions on a word processor in 18 point bold type and frame to neatly fit the 5" x 5" format. The title can be in larger print. Sample directions are presented below:

Word Challenge Game: 5

You will find words on each of the four other cards in this pack. When you know all the words on each card you can make the Challenge. Tell your teacher that you are ready to say all of the words.

Say all the words to a partner before you Challenge. Ask your partner to tell you if you missed any words.

You will get to put a star on the Word Challenge chart in space 5 if you get all the words.

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3. Type a set of words within the appropriate dimensions to go with each of the 37 rimes. For example: Words with the "ack" rime would be on one card with the title "Words with ack". The accompanying photograph presents a set of rimes in the format described. Since these rimes appear so often in words it is easy to come up with a substantial number for each rime. A list follows in Appendix A made up of the 37 common rimes and words. These were determined by teachers and students in classes in a college of education. Students might want to determine what additional words they know. Some teachers like to include proper nouns within the lists. The class also developed another list of rimes also frequently used. These rimes might be used as a follow-up Word Challenge Game. The suplemental rimes are: ace, are, each, eal, eam, ear, eed, eel, eep, eeze, end, ess, et, ike, ill, ime, int, it, ive, oat, oil, old, one, ong, ool, oop, ot, ought, ound, ow. ub, udge, uff, um, un, unch, ung, unt, urn, ust.

4. Cut out a set containing the words and a key rime. Tack this set onto a piece of the mat board with a glue stick so it won't slip. Cover the word set and the entire piece of mat board with clear plastic self-adhesive film. Trim the plastic covering.

5. Make a directions card and four word cards for each Word Challenge Game set. Be sure to number each set so they won't get mixed up.

6. Cut out photographs from a variety of magazines to place on the back of each card. Cut the pictures to fit the mat board and tack with a glue stick. Advertisements often have great pictures and can be used without the product name. *Sports Illustrated* magazine is a good source for action photographs.

Type out the number of the set five times and print with 33 point bold type. Cut out the number leaving a little white space around it. Tack the number

to the lower right hand corner with a glue stick over a small portion of the picture. Cover the photograph and the number with clear plastic adhesive as described above. This provides identifying numbers for each set of rimes with key words. Please see the accompanying photograph to see a sample card with the number of the set and a picture of a football player.

7. Place each set in a zipper lock sandwich bag. Students can "check out" a set at times designated as appropriate by the teacher. Numerous extra sets can be easily an inexpensively produced.

8. Prepare a chart with the students names with seven boxes beside each name. Number 1 through 7 above the top row of boxes. Set 7 will have 7 cards with rimes to reach the total of 37. When a student successfully challenges a word set, place a star in the corresponding box. When all are successfully completed the student can be eligible for a Word Challenge Game certificate. This can be made on a computer and signed by the teacher and the principal and/or other supportive persons.

Parent volunteers and other teacher assistants can evaluate the Challenge of a student. The examiner is encouraged to skip around rather than permit the student to read the list in order.

The teacher is encouraged to make up word lists of randomly selected words from Appendix A and test students on those words individually. This gives a good idea of retention levels. Retention levels seem to be very high.

Discussion:

The Word Challenge Game is a very sound, inexpensive, and enjoyable way to foster learning of words containing common rimes and onsets. The Word Challenge Game takes very little time and provides for productive practice.

Many variations are possible. For example, you might want to put a set of words on both sides of the card, change the dimensions, and or have more cards in each set. Efforts to learn the sets of words also encourages learning of sounds associated with initial consonant letters and consonant letter clusters (for example: bl, st, sn, etc.).

Further, the ability to transpose consonants letter sounds is also fostered. For example, a student might be thoroughly familiar with words with the "ack" rime such as pack and stack. This awareness will help the student with more unusual words such as flack.

Older students ("reading buddies" from a higher grade) might work with younger students in The Word Challenge Game. The activity undoubtedly would prove beneficial for some of the older reading buddies, as well. The Word Challenge Game could also be a great activity for children and their parents to do at home. A chart could be put on the refrigerator and prizes awarded.

References

Adams, M.J. (1990) *Beginning to read. Thinking and learning about print.* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Cunningham, P. M. (2000) *Phonics they use (3e).* New York: Longman.

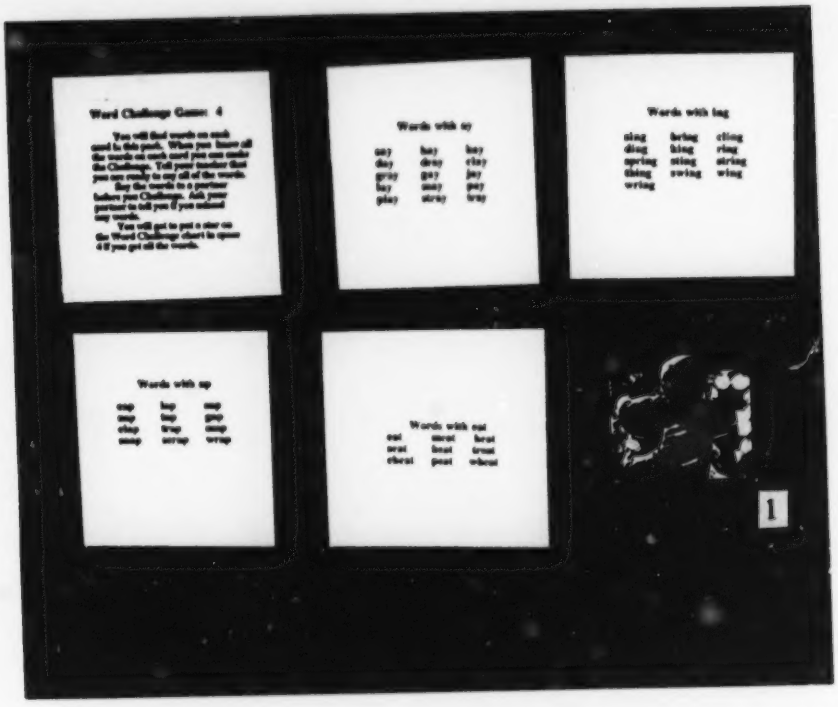
Wylie, R.E. & Durell, D.D. (1970) Teaching vowels through phonograms. *Elementary English*, 47, 787-791.

Appendix A

Common Rimes and Key Words

ack -	back, black, crack, jack, lack, pack, quack, rack, stack, shack, smack, snack, tack, track, sack
ail -	ail, fail, frail, hail, jail, mail, pail, quail, rail, sail, snail, tail, trail
ain -	brain, chain, gain, grain, lain, main, pain, plain, rain, sprain, stain, train
ake -	bake, brake, cake, flake, lake, make, rake, shake, snake, stake, take, wake
ale -	ale, bale, gale, male, pale, sale, scale, stale, tale, whale
ame -	blame, came, dame, flame, game, lame, name, same, shame, tame
an -	an, bran, can, fan, man, pan, plan, ran, span, tan, than
ank -	bank, blank, crank, frank, plank, rank, sank, spank, tank, thank, drank
ap -	cap, chap, clap, gap, lap, map, nap, sap, snap, scrap, tap, trap, wrap
are -	bare, care, dare, fare, glare, pare, scare, share, snare, square, stare
ash -	ash, cash, clash, crash, dash, flash, gash, gnash, hash, mash, rash, sash, smash, splash, trash
at -	at, cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat
ate -	ate, date, gate, hate, late, mate, plate, rate, skate, slate, state
aw -	caw, claw, draw, flaw, gnaw, jaw, law, paw, raw, slaw, squaw, straw, thaw
ay -	bay, bray, clay, day, dray, gay, gray, hay, jay, lay, may, pay, play, ray, say, stray, tray, sway
eat -	beat, cheat, eat, heat, meat, neat, peat, seat, treat, wheat
ell -	bell, cell, fell, sell, shell, smell, spell, tell, well, yell, swell
est -	best, blest, chest, guest, nest, pest, rest, test, vest, west
ice -	dice, ice, lice, nice, price, rice, slice, spice, twice
ick -	brick, chick, click, kick, lick, nick, pick, quick, sick, stick, thick, trick, wick
ide-	bride, glide, guide, hide, pride, ride, side, slide, tide, wide
ight -	bright, flight, flight, fright, light, might, night
ill -	bill, chill, dill, drill, frill, fill, grill, hill, ill, kill, mill, skill, spill still, thrill, will
in -	bin, chin, din, fin, gin, grin, in, pin, sin, skin, spin, thin, tin, twin, win
ine -	dine, fine, line, mine, nine, pine, shine, spine, swine, tine, twine, vine, whine
ing -	bring, cling, ding, king, ping, ring, sing, sling, spring, sting, string, swing, wing, wring
ink -	blink, brink, drink, ink, kink, link, ink, shrink, sink, stink, think, wink
ip-	chip, clip, dip, drip, flip, grip, hip, lip, nip, rip, ship, sip, skip, slip, snip
it-	bit, fit, grit, hit, kit, lit, mit, pit, quit, sit, slit, spit, wit, knit
ock -	block, clock, crock, dock, flock, frock, knock, lock, rock, shock, smock, sock
oke -	broke, choke, coke, joke, poke, smoke, spoke, stroke, awoke
op-	chop, crop, drop, flop, hop, lop, mop, pop, prop, shop, slop, sop, stop, top
ore -	bore, core, fore, score, shore, snore, sore, store, swore, tore, wore
ot -	blot, cot, dot, got, hot, jot, knot, lot, not, pot, plot, rot, shot, trot
ug -	bug, drug, dug, hug, jug, mug, plug, rug, snug, tug
ump -	bump, dump, hump, jump, lump, plump, rump, slump, stump, thump, trump
unk -	bunk, chunk, drunk, hunk, junk, punk, shrunk, skunk, spunk, sunk, trunk

common rimes and key words



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